

Help Increase the Peace as a derivative of AVP : A personal story

I was the national coordinator of Help Increase the Peace from 2002 until 2007 as an employee of the American Friends Service Committee, Middle Atlantic Region. During that time I had an opportunity to work with many people around the country and overseas, many of them had originally been trained in AVP. HIP was derived from AVP in 1991 when some AFSC staff in Buffalo, NY attended an AVP workshop and decided they would rather reach young people before they found themselves in jail and teach them non-violence.

My first HIP workshop was with a former staff member of AFSC who used the 5 day model to train teachers in the Baltimore County school system who would use the methodology in their classrooms without calling it HIP. From her and the young woman she co-facilitated with I learned that it was possible to prepare facilitators by spending two days on the Basic followed immediately by a day looking at facilitation principles and two days of the participants delivering the Advanced workshop to each other in teams of three. I continued to use this model throughout the 5 years, presenting this way on the east coast, in California, Tokyo Japan and Hong Kong.

One of the trips I took to California offered me an opportunity to work with the local AVP group there. With Dottie Joos and others as co-facilitators, we presented a T4T which qualified the participants to lead either AVP or HIP as they wished. We found that our methods were very similar and it was easy for us to work together. I think we both learned. After that, several AVP facilitators came to 5 day HIP workshops in either California or Washington and found that what they learned most was the difference in pacing when working with young people. The younger the participants, the faster things go. I did many workshops which had more adults than youth and would need to get the adults to spend less time discussing and more time interacting.

Facilitating in Japan and Hong Kong called on my experience in cross cultural communication. With a masters degree in this field and a year of living in Kenya, I am very aware that much of what we share in HIP has a cultural bias. Probably the most challenging is I messages. In Japan they wanted to figure out how to alter them themselves. As our language differences are so great, they asked I just teach it the way we do it and they would figure it out for themselves. In Hong Kong, it fit the culture more. Yet I worked with interpreters to make the principles clear without being too attached to the form.

In Hong Kong I spent three weeks, each with a very different group of people. The first workshop was with middle school students, the second with incarcerated drug addicts and the third with college students. I was able to use the same basic agenda working with a team of local people who had been trained initially in AVP. However, the way the workshops unfolded varied based on age and experience. Again, I found that the older and better educated participants were able to spend a great deal more time processing the activities and the younger ones wanted more Lifts (Light and Livlies) and did not want to go so in depth. The incarcerated young men were so much like the inner city youth here

it was surprising, doing role plays that wanted to devolve into violence and having a hard time coming up with non-violent solutions.

All in all, the work I did over those five years was a blessing, giving me an opportunity to get to know many interesting people and hopefully touching their lives in the deep way they touched mine.

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